MALACOLOGIA, 2014, 57(1): 247-248

A TRIBUTE TO DICK PETIT 1931-2013

On December 31, 2013 Richard Eugene Petit
passed away, and with his passing the field of malacology lost a unique, highly valued col-league and contributor. He was one of those
rare individuals who, as a successful business-
man in insurance and real estate, turned an abundance of curiosity and energy into a paral-lel universe of fascination with shells, then shell books and subsequently delving ever deeper into the global malacological literature. Charles Sturm remarked: “In 1965, he pur-chased a shell and book dealership, with which he would ultimately become the foremost used shell book dealer in the United States. Dick became an accomplished avocational pale-ontologist and malacologist. He was author or co-author of over 100 peer-reviewed publica-tions on Recent and fossil mollusks, beginning in 1964 and continuing to the present. He was a recognized world expert on the gastropod family Cancellariidae.”
But his truly unique passion was for nomen-clature — determining when and where a taxon was first published. He learned early on that the encyclopedia of information for any species is based not only on the name of a species but

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also on the author and valid date of publication. His last published note on this all-consuming concern was published on the day he died, in the latest issue of Malacologia, 2013, 56(1/2): 357, Richard E. Petit & The Editors: “Literature citations: authors of taxa with date of publica-tion should be mandatory.”
Sturm further recognized that “Dick’s knowl-edge of the malacological literature was legendary. He amassed one of the more significant private libraries and helped many others find the works they needed to prosecute their work. Dick also possessed an in-depth knowledge of the history of malacology. Many will remember some of his recent monographs on malacologists of the 19th Century, including Lovell Reeve, William Wood, and the Sowerby family. Many of us would have been proud to have produced any one of these monographs, let alone all of them and others.”
And Dick was a real team player, a strong supporter of the American Malacological So-ciety of which he was President (1987-1988), Secretary/Treasurer (1991—1993), and Honor-ary Life Member. For many years he served with me on the society's Endowment Commit-

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tee. In 1990 he was awarded the Katherine Palmer Award by the Paleontological Research Institute, of which he was a Research Associate
for 20 years (1982-2002). | will greatly miss his highly productive collaborative projects with like-minded colleagues, e.g. Eugene Coan, who is copy editor of Malacologia and affiliated with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Rüdiger Bieler of the Field Museum and Alan Kabat, a trained malacologist turned lawyer associated with the Museum of Com-parative Zoology of Harvard University. | have listed below a sample of the works produced by this creative team. An in-depth review of Dick’s life and publications is being prepared by others, so | do not provide an exhaustive list of his publications here.
| will deeply miss his constant willingness to review manuscripts and his strong guidance on matters of literature citations and taxonomic issues. He had such a deep fund of knowledge covering a wide swath of malacology. He was always willing to help researchers world-wide who asked him for help and assistance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

| thank Rüdiger Bieler, Eugene V. Coan and Alan Kabat for their comments on this tribute to Dick Petit. Sections in quotation marks were written and extracted from a short obituary provided by Charles Sturm. The photograph was kindly provided by Robert Robertson from his vast collection in his Rogues Gallery of Malacologists.

Geoge M. Davis, Editor